DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 361 IR 054 909

AUTHOR	Voelker, Chris
TITLE	The History of the Barberton Public Library 1903-1990.
PUB DATE	Nov 90
NOTE	72p.; M.L.S. Research Paper, Kent State University.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Biographies; *Library Development; Local History; *Public Libraries; Social History
IDENTIFIERS	*Barberton Public Library OH; Historical Methods; Historical Research; *Library History; Ohio

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to relate the history and growth of the Barberton Public Library (Ohio) as it has been influenced by its founders and its six directors. The biography of prominent persons who have in some way affected the development of libraries is also considered to be part of library history. The following persons and their careers are discussed: Ohio Columbus Barber, founder of the town of Barberton and library directors Mary Taplin (1903-1914); Tallulah Kirk (1914-1943; Jean Galehouse (1943-1948); Elisabeth Bliler (1948-1966); Helen Bertsch (1966-1976); and Barbara Kirbawy (1976-). (Contains 53 references.) (JLB)

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THE HISTORY OF THE BARBERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY 1903-1990

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Chris Voelker

November, 1990

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ABSTRACT

There have been a few books written on the city of Barberton's history that mention the Barberton Public Library, but there has never been a book written exclusively on the library itself. The purpose of this paper is to relate the library's history and growth as it has been influenced by its founders and the library's six directors. The biography of prominent persons who have in some way affected the development of libraries is also considered to be part of library history.

Libraries are established to serve a particular community and its unique needs. Barberton Public Library is no exception. The original purpose for the establishment of a library in Barberton was to provide a social club and library for young women. This paper will trace from this humble beginning in a rented room to the modern facility on Park Avenue in downtown Barberton, across from beautiful Lake Anna.

Master's Research Paper by

Chris Voelker

B.S., University of Akron, 1988

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1990

Approved by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff of the Barberton Public Library for their assistance in locating materials relating to this paper. I would especially like to thank Barbara Kirbawy, Director of the Barberton Public Library and also Phyllis Taylor, head of the library's Local History Department.

INTRODUCTION

The municipal public library was a gradual development from the nineteenth century subscription libraries that originated in England. While libraries are designed to encourage popular reading, special emphasis on adult education was characteristic of public libraries in English speaking countries.

In the United States the first public library was established in New Hampshire in 1833.[1] The American public library has always depended on influential, public minded citizens to help establish and endow libraries in their communities.

There have been a few books written on the history of the city of Barberton that mention the Barberton Public Library, but there has never been a book written exclusively on the library itself. The purpose of this paper is to relate the library's history and growth as it has been influenced by its founders and the library's six directors. The biography of prominent persons who have in some way affected the development of libraries is also considered to be part of library history.

Libraries are established to serve a particular community

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[1]Lawrence S. Thompson, "Libraries: Modern History Since 1600," in The Encyclopedia Americana: International Edition (New York: Americana Corporation, 1967), 362.

and its unique needs. Barberton Public Library is no exception. The original purpose for the establishment of a library in Barberton was to provide a social club and library for young women.[2] This paper will trace from this humble beginning in a rented room to the modern facility on Park Avenue in downtown Barberton, across from beautiful Lake Anna.

The Barberton Public Library has been in four different locations since it opened in 1903. From its original location on the second floor in the Whigam and Shubert Building it was moved briefly to the City Building in the early 1920's. In 1925 the library moved to the basement of the Masonic Temple where it remained for over thirty years. Barberton was the only city in Ohio without a library building of its own until 1957, when the new library was built.[3] Extensive renovation that included an addition to the building was completed in 1986, transforming it into an attractive, modern library that any city would be proud of.

The historical method was chosen for this study. The historical method recounts past events pertaining to the establishment, upkeep, and utilization of organized collections of recorded information. The advantage of the

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[2]W. A. Johnston and O. E. Olin, Barberton and Kenmore, Ohio: The Golden Years, (Barberton, Ohio: Barberton Historical Society, 1976), 78.

[3]"Proposed Rewrite of History Page for Annual Report," Barberton Public Library (Ohio), 17 November 1981. (photocopied page.)

historical method is that you can assess past events and their effect on present circumstances. This research paper involved a study of historical documents, library publications, pamphlets, newspapers, patron registrations, census data, and biographies of prominent people.

The literature search for this study consisted of researching materials at Kent State University Library, Akron Public Library, University of Akron's Bierce Library, and the Barberton Public Library. Searching OCLC, Library and Information Science Abstracts, and Library Literature did not reveal any usable information. All the volumes of Library Literature, from 1921 up into 1990, were examined. Barberton Public Library had the most substantial materials, including a vertical file containing extensive newspaper clippings and photographs.

The Barberton Public Library directors' and term of office:

Mary Taplin	1903-1914
Tallulah Kirk	1914-1943
Jean Galehouse	1943-1948
Elisabeth Bliler	1948-1966
Helen Bertsch	1966-1976
Barbara Kirbawy	1976-

OHIO COLUMBUS BARBER

The manufacturing town of Barberton, Ohio was a planned community, founded by the Barberton Land and Improvement Company. The man primarily responsible for the development of this town was Ohio Columbus Barber for whom the city was named. Barber was a leading industrialist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Barber, along with M.J. Alexander of Pittsburgh, planned the industrial base of the proposed community.[4]

Ohio Columbus Barber, the son of George and Eliza Barber, was born in the village of Middlebury in Summit county, on April 20, 1841.[5] Middlebury later became Akron's sixth ward.[6] The basis for O.C. Barber's industrial empire was his father's match factory. George Barber started a match factory in Middlebury in 1845 in his barn.[7] George did not have a salesman and distribution of his product was a problem. There were no railways in Akron at that time, and because of the danger of transporting the combustible matches it was

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[4]William Franklin Fleming, America's Match King: Ohio Columbus Barber, 1841-1921 (Barberton, Ohio: Barberton Historical Society, 1981), 96.

[5]Ibid., 1.

[6]Ibid., 12.

[7]Ibid., 3.

difficult to get teamsters to carry the matches for local distribution.[8]

Barber gave up match production until his son, Ohio, convinced him to return to match manufacturing in 1857. Ohio Barber was sixteen years old when he became his father's salesman, peddling matches with a horse and wagon. He traveled all over Ohio and into adjoining states.[9] The Barber match business grew rapidly. Ohio Barber is given much of the credit for the success of the business. His father made him a full partner in 1861 and put him in complete charge of management.[10] By the age of forty, Ohio Barber controlled eight-five percent of the domestic market, and at sixty he controlled the world match market.[11]

O.C. Barber was a large man, with a quick temper. However, he was usually a friendly and agreeable person. His friends called him "Hi," and he was loyal to those he liked. He consciously worked to earn the respect of his friends and the community.[12] He became a great benefactor to the city of Akron from 1880 to 1910. It was later said of him that he was good to Akron, but that he was tight when it came to

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[8]Ibid., 4.

[9]Ibid., 5.

[10]Ibid., 7.

[11]Ibid., 6.

[12]Ibid.

Barberton. Barber's one major gift to Barberton was the Barber Public Library.[13]

It was in 1890 that Barber and Alexander started their venture to found an industrial town. Alexander had developed a "magic formula" for turning farm lands into thriving industrial towns, having successfully started two towns in Pennsylvania. Barberton is still known as the "Magic City." Alexander's theory for developing towns was to first build an industrial base to create jobs and then the people would soon follow.[14]

Previously, in 1888, Barber had secured options on five hundred and fifty acres of land west of New Portage.[15] The land bordered the Ohio Canal and was cut by two trunk line railroads. The transportation facilities made it an attractive area for industrial development. Barber had the land and he had recently organized companies that needed plant locations.[16] He could easily turn his planned industrial expansion into one of Alexander's "magic cities." Barber formed a land company comprised of thirteen Pennsylvania and Ohio capitalists who held shares in the Barberton Land and Improvement Company. The company was incorporated in May

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[13]Ibid., 262.

[14]Ibid., 95.

[15]Ibid., 94.

[16]Ibid., 95.

1891.[17] Figure 1 displays a map of Barberton, 1891.

The growing community became dissatisfied with certain conditions, such as the lack of local schools. The land company tried to help solve the community's problems, but were not equipped to handle them. Leaders of the community decided it would be to their best interest to incorporate as a village and keep their tax dollars at home. Barberton gained its village charter in 1892.[18]

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[17]Ibid., 97.

[18]Ibid., 99.

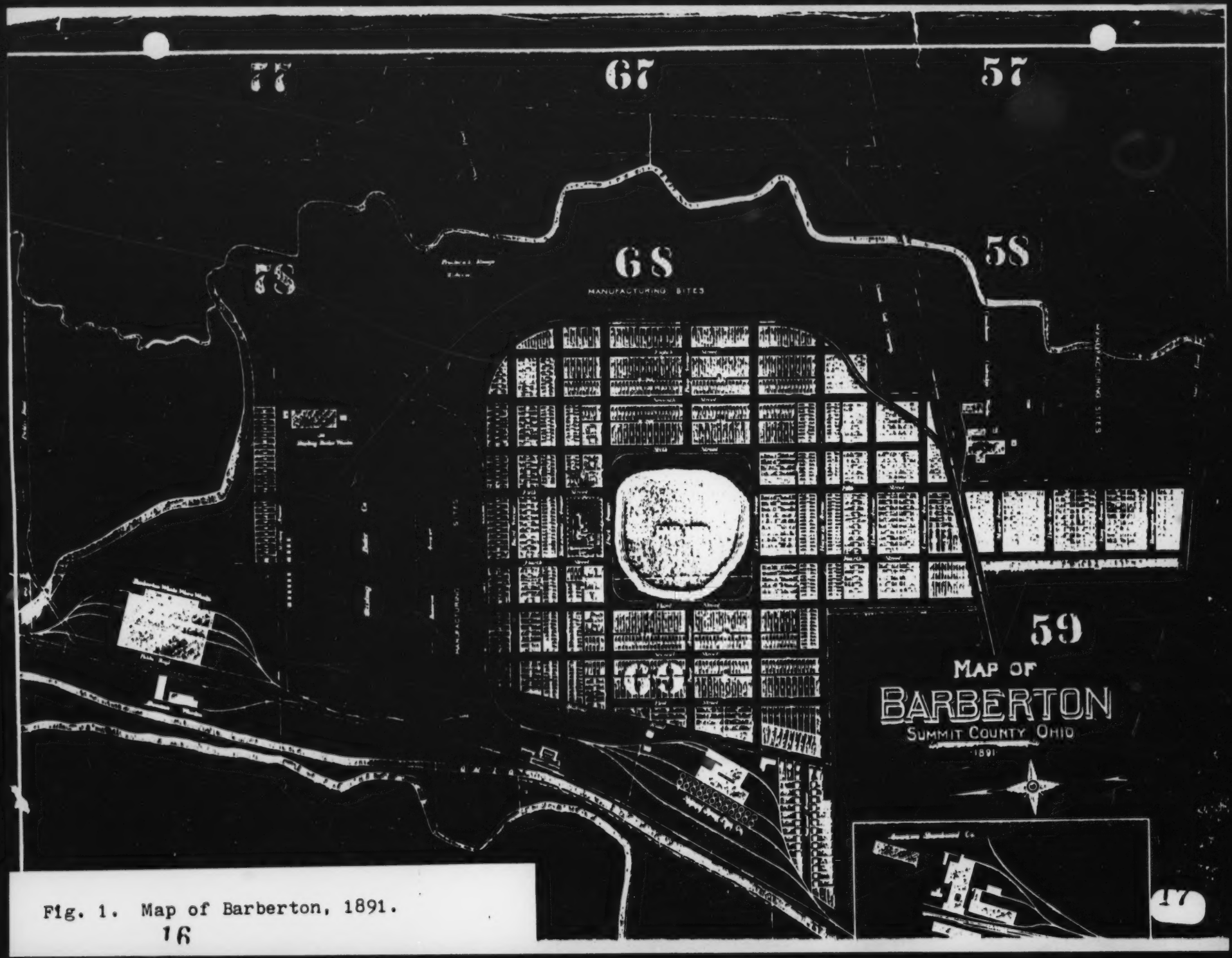

Fig. 1. Map of Barberton, 1891.

MARY TAPLIN 1903-1914 and the BARBER PUBLIC LIBRARY

By 1898 Barberton was prospering. New factories and schools were being built, thereby creating jobs and education for men, women and their families. The ladies of the town became concerned because there was no place of entertainment suitable for young women. The ladies of Barberton, led by Mrs. William Johnston, decided to rent a room for a girl's club, library and restroom. The ladies approached O.C. Barber for a donation. Barber told the collection committee that he would build, equip, and maintain a library if the citizens of Barberton would pledge $1,000 toward the construction. Figures 2, 3, and 4 are examples of letters received by Mrs. Johnston in response to her request for donations toward the establishment of a library. The ladies quickly raised the money and informed Barber of their success. Barber, for some unknown reason, did not follow through on his pledge.[19]

Finally, over a year later, Mrs. Johnston told him that he was not keeping his word to the people and those who had donated cash wanted their money back. Mr. Barber then took action, but donated less that he had said he would. Barber rented a large room on the second floor of the Whigam and

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[19]Johnston, 78.

O. C. BARBER, Pres't
J. K. ROBINSON, Vice Pres't

E. R. STETTINIUS, Treas.
H. S. PELL, Superintendent

SALES AGENCIES:

NEW YORK. SAN FRANCISCO.
PHILADELPHIA. BALTIMORE.
BOSTON. ST. LOUIS.
PITTSBURG. YOKOHAMA, JAP.
TOLEDO. JOHANNESBURG, S.A.R.
NEW ORLEANS. HAVANA, CUBA.
DENVER. CITY OF MEXICO.

The Stirling Company,

WATER TUBE SAFETY BOILERS.

General Offices, CHICAGO, ILL.
PULLMAN BLDG.

Shops & Foundry,
BARBERTON, O.

Chicago, Feb. 24, 1899.

Mrs. W. A. Johnston,

Barberton, Ohio.

Dear Madam:-

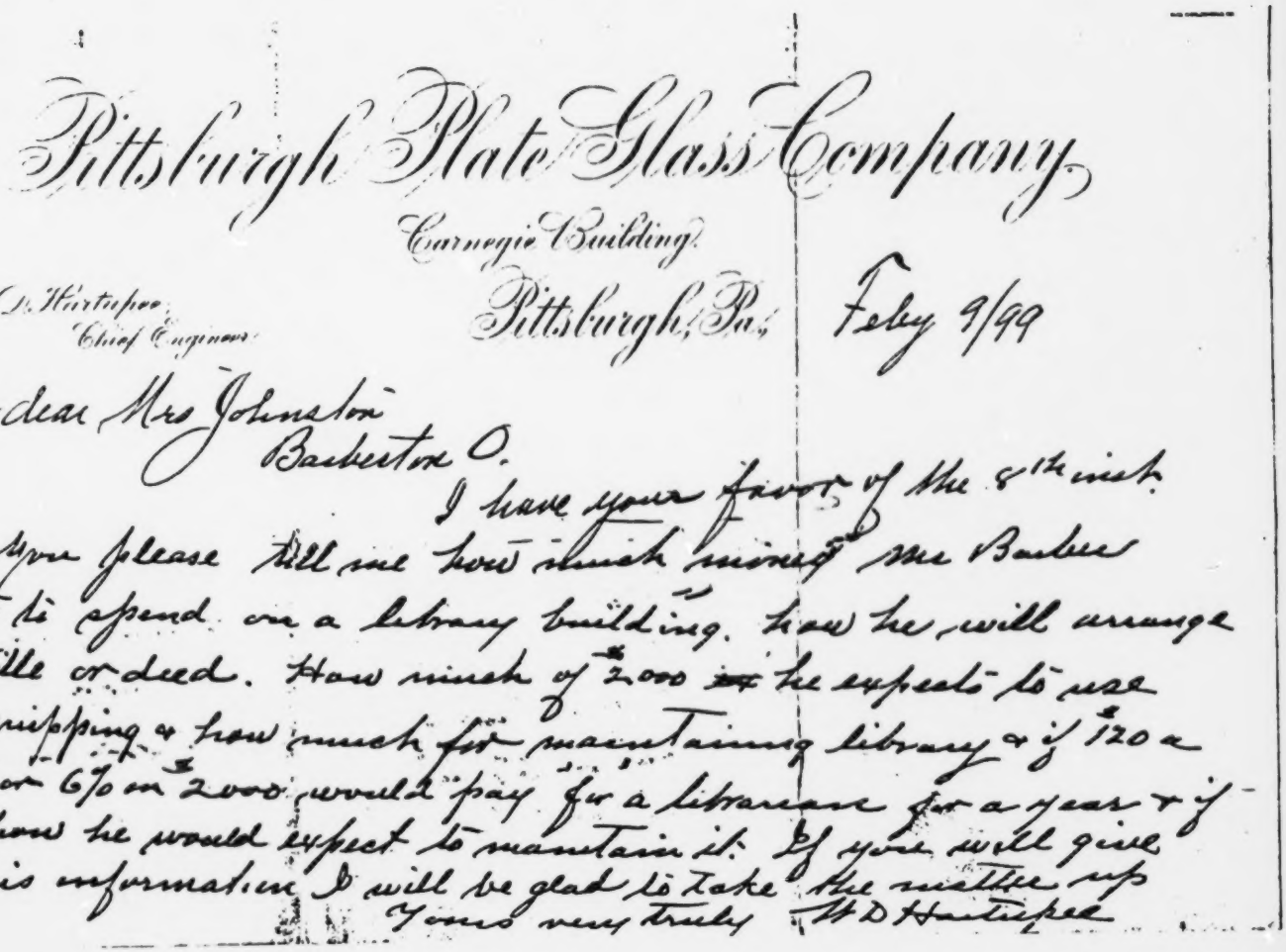
I have to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 13th, and in answer would say that I will be glad to do my small share for the proposed Library at Barberton. You may call on me, then, whenever you are ready for a check for $25., which will be sent you with pleasure.

I hope that you are meeting with success, and if I can be of any service, I will be glad to have you call on me.

Yours truly,

185-193, MW.

Fig. 2. Letter of response to the request for a donation from The Stirling Company.



Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company.

Carnegie Building.

Wm. D. Hartupee, Chief Engineer.

Pittsburgh, Pa., Feby 9/99

My dear Mrs Johnston
Barberton O.

I have your favor of the 8th inst. will you please tell me how much money Mr Barber expects to spend on a library building. how he will arrange the title or deed. How much of $2000 he expects to use for equipping & how much for maintaining library & if $120 a year or 6% on $2000 would pay for a librarian for a year & if not how he would expect to maintain it. If you will give me this information I will be glad to take the matter up

Yours very truly W D Hartupee

Fig. 3. Letter of response to the request for a donation from the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company.

O. C. BARBER, Prest.
K. ROBINSON, Vice Prest.
E. R. STETTINIUS, Treas
H. S. PELL, Superintendent

SALES AGENCIES:

NEW YORK. SAN FRANCISCO.
PHILADELPHIA. BALTIMORE.
BOSTON. ST. LOUIS.
PITTSBURG. YOKOHAMA, JAP.
TOLEDO. JOHANNESBURG, S.A.R.
NEW ORLEANS. HAVANA, CUBA.
DENVER. CITY OF MEXICO.

The Stirling Company.

WATER TUBE SAFETY BOILERS.

General Offices, CHICAGO, ILL.
PULLMAN BLDG.

Shops & Foundry.
BARBERTON, O.

Chicago, Feb. 28, 1899.

Mrs. W. A. Johnston,

Barberton, Ohio.

Dear Madam:-

Won't you be good enough to advise me what success you are meeting with in raising funds necessary for the establishment of a Library in Barberton? How much money have you raised, and who is subscribing? Has anything been done by the different Companies located in Barberton? The movement is one we would like to help in, and we wouldbe glad to have any suggestions, etc., that you may feel disposed to offer.

Yours very truly,

THE STIRLING COMPANY.

Treas.

186-105, MV.

Fig. 4. Letter of response to the request for a donation from The Stirling Company.

Shubert Building, located at 100 1/2 Tuscarawas Avenue.[20] The rooms consisted of the main room for the library, a reference room, a reading room, and a smaller room that wasn't used for any special purpose.[21] Barber hired a friend, Mrs. Mary Taplin, who had previously worked in O'Neil's book department, to take charge of equipping and running the new library. He also provided furniture and shelves. Barber donated 2,400 volumes from his collection, which included history, biography, poetry, reference books, popular fiction, travel, and juvenile books.[22]

The Barber Public Library was officially opened to the public on April 7, 1903.[23] The nucleus of the library consisted of the 2,400 volumes that were presented to the library by Mr. Barber. In addition to this another 1,000 volumes were either purchased by the city or donated by friends.[24] The only other known contribution from Mr. Barber to the Barber Public Library was his presentation of six sets

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[20]Ibid.

[21]"Over 5,000 Volumes on Shelves of Barber Public Library," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), [October 1913].

[22]George Davis, The Story of Barberton, Ohio: The Magic City, (Barberton, Ohio: Barberton Public Library, 1963), 51.

[23]According to Fleming, 262, a formal presentation for the Barber Public Library took place in July 1902. All other sources for this paper stated the library opened on April 7, 1903.

[24]"History of the Barberton Public Library," Barberton Public Library (Ohio), 21 August 1986. (photocopied page.)

of books valued at over $500.[25] Mr. Barber had promised to provide for the library in his will. However, his final will which was written in 1915 did not mention the library.[26] It is known that Anna Barber Bevan, daughter of O.C. Barber, also presented books from her own library which were valued at $200.[27]

The first board members were sworn in on May 14, 1903, by the mayor of Barberton and the city began to maintain the library financially. Mrs. Mary Taplin, the first librarian, was with the library until May of 1914, when she resigned.[28]

The Barber Public Library was rarely mentioned in the local newspaper or the Akron Beacon Journal. The articles that were printed described the growth and development of the new library through circulation growth and additions to the collection. The title of the new books, with authors, were listed also. In some articles the librarian, Mrs. Taplin, reported on the use of the library by school children. In one article Mrs. Taplin stated that since the library is supported by the taxpayers, and the greatest demand among the various classes of reading is for fiction, the demands of the public

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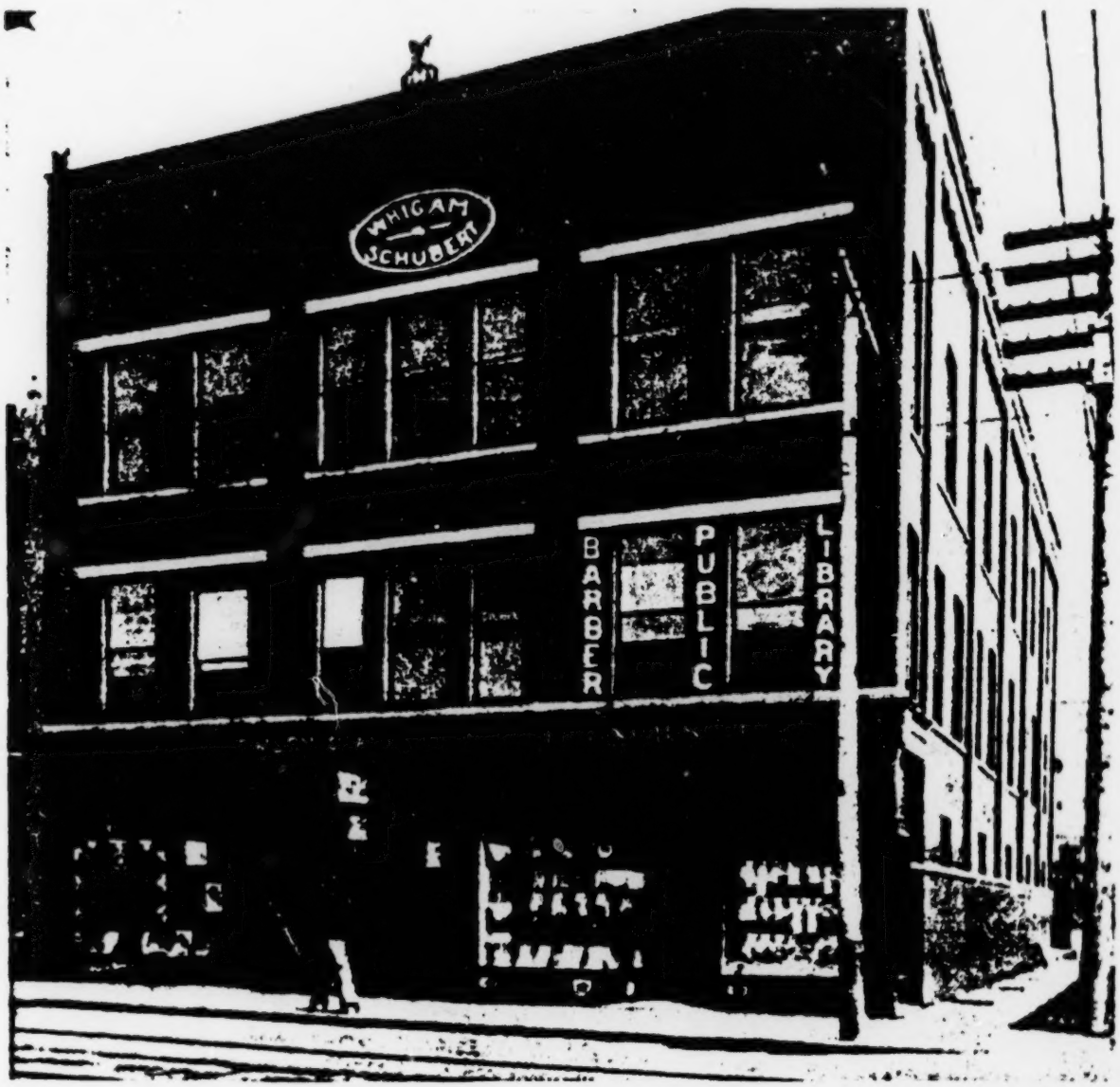
[25]"Barber Gives Big Lot of Books," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), [3 December 1903-1914].

[26]Fleming, 263.

[27]"Valuable Present to the Library," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), [7 April 19??].

[28]Davis, 51.



Barber Public Library

Fig. 5. Barber Public Library located in the Whigam and Schubert Building. 1903-1922.

should be respected.[29]

Also of interest during this period was a publication put out by the Barber Public Library. This pamphlet lists the rules and regulations of the library and included such items as "Noise or loud conversation is prohibited," and "The use of tobacco is prohibited." The library hours listed were, September first to June first, open every week day from 1 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.; June first to September first, open every week day from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The library was closed on Sundays and legal holidays.[30]

The Barber Public Library was being used more and more as the years passed by. The only problems mentioned in newspapers dealt with lack of space. As early as April, 1908 the library board was considering moving the library to a new location.[31] The rooms in the Whigam and Shubert Building were becoming too crowded for the growing collection of books. One article wrote about a very successful "Story Hour" for little children, which started in December, 1910, that had to be given up for lack of room when new shelves were placed in the

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[29]"Over 5,000 Volumes on Shelves of Barber Public Library."

[30]"Barber Public Library History," Barberton Public Library (Ohio), [1903-1914]. (pamphlet.)

[31]["...Flourishing...in Literary Sense"], Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), [April 1908].

reading room less than a year later.[32]

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[32][title unknown], [newspaper clipping provided by Barberton Public Library] (Ohio), [1911].

TALLULAH KIRK 1914-1943

Mrs. Tallulah Kirk became the city's second librarian, serving from 1914 to January 1, 1943. Some of the information available from that period in time is sketchy. Although the library was popular, Notes from Library Board of Directors Books reveal that in 1914 the new librarian, Mrs. Kirk, received less income and the library hours were decreased. Also noteworthy is the library's brief move in the early 1920s to the City Building. When rooms at the City Building were offered to the library in 1919 they were deemed unsuitable, but by 1922 the crowded conditions of the Whigam and Schubert building forced the move.[33]

In December 1923 The Barber Public Library was invited to become a member of the American Library Association.[34] By 1924 there were 10,000 volumes in the library. Also that year, the city council authorized the mayor to transfer the municipal library to the Board of Trustees of the Barberton School District. The transfer became effective January 1, 1925. In May of 1925 the library was moved to its third location, which was rented space in the basement of the

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[33]"Notes From Library Board of Directors Books" Barberton Public Library (Ohio), [1909-1942]. (photocopied page.)

[34]Ibid.

Fig. 6. Barber Public Library was located in the basement of the Masonic Temple for over 30 years.

Masonic Temple, on the corner of Tuscarawas and Fifth Street. A five year lease was negotiated. This turned out to be the library's home for over thirty years.[35]

In 1928 the Budget Commission of Summit County was asked to provide the necessary funds for the current expenses of the Barber Public Library for the fiscal year of 1929.

The result of the Depression was that the library's budget was almost $2,000 lower in 1931 than in 1930. The salaries of the librarian, staff, and board treasurer were reduced ten percent and the library phone was changed to one of limited service, thereby cutting its monthly cost in half.[36]

In 1933 a change was made in the rules of the library to extend its benefits to all inhabitants of Summit County. This made the library eligible for participation in the distribution of taxes to be assessed under the tax laws of the State of Ohio, as amended by Senate Bill #30.[37] As a result, in 1934 the library received its first new books in nearly three years.[38]

By 1935, Mrs. Kirk had raised the book stock to 17,524

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[35]Davis, 52.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]"Notes from Library Board of Directors Books."

volumes. The circulation in that year was 47,268. There were 8,606 registered borrowers.[37]

[37]Davis, 52.

JEAN GALEHOUSE 1943-1948

After twenty-eight years of service to the library patrons of Barberton, Mrs. Kirk resigned January 1, 1943. Miss Jean Galehouse was chosen to replace Mrs. Kirk as head librarian. Miss Galehouse had previously been a teacher with the Barberton Public Schools. A resident of Akron, she graduated from the University of Akron and received her Masters of Arts degree from the same institution. She studied library courses at the University of Southern California.[40]

The circulation of volumes totaled 55,376 by 1944. The library's collection consisted of fifteen percent non-fiction, forty-six percent adult fiction, and twenty-nine percent children's books. This left ten percent unclassified. Surprisingly, there were only 6,472 registered borrowers, down from 1935's total of 8,606.[41]

Miss Galehouse began the circulation of books among the patients at Barberton Hospital, and initiated a summer story hour at the parks in Barberton. In 1947 it was decided to change the name from Barber Public Library to Barberton Public Library. Miss Galehouse left her post at Barberton Public

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[40]"Mrs. Kirk to Retire as Public Librarian," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 4 December 1942.

[41]"8,000 More Books Rented at Barber Library in 1944," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), [1945].

Library in 1948 to find library work in California.[42]

[42]Davis, 52.

ELISABETH BLILER 1948-1966 and the BARBERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Miss Elisabeth Bliler was named head librarian to replace Miss Galehouse. Elisabeth was born in Canal Fulton, Ohio, July 26, 1907.[43] She received her B.A. degree from Flora Stone Mather College, Western Reserve, with majors and minors in Latin, Romance Languages, and English. She received her library degree from the School of Library Science, Western Reserve. She taught school first in Florida, and then in Barberton. She was the librarian at Barberton High School from 1945 until she accepted the post at Barberton Public Library. She left the Barberton Library in 1966 to assume the same job at Canal Fulton Public Library.[44]

The eighteen years as head librarian at Barberton were busy ones. Miss Bliler added phonograph records and films to the services of the library, plus the summer reading program for children.[45]

Miss Bliler was also involved with the Canal Fulton Summer Theater with David Fulford and William Dempsey. Other

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[43]Who's Who in Library Service 3rd ed. (New York: Grolier Society, 1955), 42.

[44]Rhoda Phillips, "Elisabeth Bliler to Leave Library," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 6 June 1966.

[45]Davis, 52.

spare time activities included the Ohio Library Association and Zonta International, a service organization for women in executive positions.[46]

The highlight of Miss Bliler's career was the new library that was built in 1957 on the corner of Park Avenue and Fifth Street across from beautiful Lake Anna. The library had been housed in the basement of the Masonic Temple since 1925. During the lean years of the depression, when the library budget was cut, the space at the Masonic Temple was sufficient for their needs. However, in the late 1930's the library started to push forward again.

By the late 1930's the United States and its' citizens were devoted to the war effort. The staff at Barber Public Library participated, one example being its involvement in a local drive to collect books for servicemen. Over 1,600 books were collected by March 6, 1942.[47]

After the war the library grew rapidly with the addition of new public services, such as the ones named during Miss Galehouse's tenure. Many volumes were added to the existing book collection.

On February 1, 1950 the Barberton Public Library changed its' hours for the first time in many years. The daily schedule had been Monday through Friday 12:30 p.m. to 8:30

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[46]Phillips.

[47]"Notes from Library Board of Directors Books."

p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Starting in February the library hours were Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.[48]

By the early 1950's it became apparent that the library collection was too big to be housed in such small quarters. The current librarian, Miss Bliler, and the library board began searching for a new home for the Barberton Public Library. Barberton, at that time, was the only city in Ohio that did not have its own library building.[49]

By July of 1954 the library board had $60,000 available toward construction of a new library. The library board asked Barberton City Council to donate the land at Tuscarawas Avenue and Fifth Street where the old Barberton City Building had been torn down. If the site was donated by City Council, the library board could have used the entire amount toward construction of the building.

The $60,000 came from taxes on intangibles, such as dividends from stock, paid by residents of Summit County. These taxes were the source of funds, at that time, for libraries under Ohio law. The $60,000 was assigned to Barberton Public Library by the Summit County Budget Commission, which was the authority that distributed such

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[48]"Barberton Library to Open Earlier Feb. 1," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 13 January 1950.

[49]"Council Rejects Donating Land for Library Building," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 29 July 1954.

intangible taxes to libraries. If the library officials did not get started on the building, these tax funds would be assigned to the Akron Public Library for its' branch expansion program. Intangible tax payers of Barberton had paid through the years to help other libraries in Summit County acquire library buildings.[50]

The library authorities also investigated the possibility of acquiring a site facing Lake Anna Park. Such property could only be obtained by purchasing a residence. Roger Buzzard of Barberton was chosen as architect. Buzzard said that such structures were not built to bear the weight of stacks of books and that razing and rebuilding would be more cost efficient than remodeling and restructuring.

Tentative plans for the library building called for a two story structure with a basement, totalling 24,000 square feet of floor space. The new library would have more than three times the floor space than they had had in their rented quarters at the Masonic Temple. At that time it was believed that any future expansion would be in the establishment of branch libraries.[51]

The library board's first choice for the building site was the Tuscarawas-Fifth Street location. The board reasoned

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[50]Curtis G. White, "Barberton Lags Behind Other Cities, Village...," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 1 July 1954.

[51]Ibid.

that this site would save the taxpayer's money and the $60,000 could go toward construction instead of being spent to purchase land. In order to gain support for the acquisition of the old City Building cite, petitions were circulated. These petitions were circulated not only among residents of Barberton but also among residents of the surrounding area served by the library. Miss Bliler pointed out that the library served many non-residents of Barberton, including some who lived in Doylestown, Wadsworth, and other areas outside of Summit County but who work in Barberton.[52]

In spite of the library board's effort, the Barberton City Council unanimously turned down the request that the city-owned land or any part of it be given to the library for construction of a library building. However, the city council did suggest that it might help the library board acquire another piece of land for a building site, preferably a location facing Lake Anna.[53]

By March of 1955, the Barberton Public Library had purchased property at Park and Fifth Street. The board paid $40,000 to Mrs. Cline of Akron for two homes and a lot at 600 Park Avenue. Earlier the board had paid $24,000 for the John Dempster house and lot at 606 Park Avenue. This gave them a

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[52]Ibid.

[53]"Council Rejects Donating Land for Library Building."

108 x 130 foot tract, which was half the block.[54]

The National Home Wrecking Company razed the houses on the library property and the Ernest Alessio Construction Company was contracted to build the new library. Robert Hunker, decorator, was chosen to coordinate the library decorating and furnishings.[55]

Roger Buzzard stated that he and the library board studied other libraries to find out what a library should be and do. They attended library conventions and talked with architects who had constructed new buildings. They studied the new libraries and picked out the points they wanted to incorporate into Barberton's plans.[56]

Late in 1955 the Summit County Tax Commission announced that intangible tax funds would be available to cover the estimated cost of $230,000 for the new library building.[57] Roger Buzzard presented a design for the building to the library board. The brick building was designed in harmony with the Municipal Building and the adjacent Masonic Hall. The plans called for a basement, first, and second floors.

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[54]"Frontage on Lake Anna Assured for Library," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 8 March 1955.

[55]Davis, 53.

[56]"Our New Library More Than a Dream," Barberton Herald (Ohio), [1955].

[57]"Work to Begin in Spring on Construction of New Barberton Public Library Building," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 24 November 1955.

The building would be L-shaped with the long portion of the structure 93 x 92 feet long.[58]

The structure had a capacity of 96,000 volumes and could seat one hundred and seventy persons, with space for another fifty seats in an audio-visual auditorium on the second floor. The first floor contained a main control desk, children's and young person's sections and a two-level lounge. Also included were the library office, staff room and lavatories.

The second floor auditorium could serve as both a social room and an exhibition room. Also located on the second floor would be the adult reading lounge, the serious reading and reference section, the staff lounge and kitchenette, as well as a music room with three listening booths. The basement would house the reference and research stacks, storage area, and staff workroom for book repairs and work. Staff parking was in the rear of the building.[59]

Construction on the new building was started in the spring of 1956. The construction was of concrete block, brick facing, steel beam and joist system of framing, with heat absorbing glass and glass block. Floors were concrete covered with tile.[60]

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[58]"Barberton Has Plans for Library," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 6 June 1955.

[59]Ibid.

[60]"Work to Begin in Spring on Construction of New Barberton Public Library Building."

The building was erected thirty-six feet back from the front lot line and in line with the remaining dwellings on Park Avenue. There were bicycle parking areas along the Fifth Street side of the building and an auto parking area at the rear for five staff cars. A night book deposit was constructed on the Fifth Street side of the building.[41]

Construction on the new library was prolonged in the late summer and fall of 1956 because of delays in structural steel deliveries as the result of a nationwide strike. The main structural steel that was scheduled for erection at the first part of September was rescheduled for late December. Further complications were caused by forcing other construction into winter work.[42]

Construction was completed on the new library by August 1957. Interior decorating and custom-made furniture had to be completed before the official opening was held.

The mammoth task of transferring the approximately 40,000 volumes from the old library to the new building across Fifth Street got underway by the middle of September. Library users were asked to check out their limit of books and not to return them for a month. This reduced the number of books to be transferred immediately. For approximately two weeks, the

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[41]"Barberton Has Plans for Library."

[42]"Steel Strike Delays Work on Barberton Public Library," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 6 September 1957.

librarians, their assistants, and volunteers from the Barberton Fire Department carried the books across the street from the library's former location. Special care had to be taken to see that the books were properly stacked in the new shelves.[43] [44]

Miss Bliler opened the new library with an insufficient staff. To get maximum service from the new building she hired two more full time helpers and two more part time people. Hours at the new library were the same as the previous fall and winter months, from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.[45]

The dedication ceremony for the new library was held Saturday, November 2, 1957 at 2:00 p.m. in front of the building. The street was blocked off for the ceremony to prevent damage to the new lawn and shrubbery. The program featured the Barberton High School band, the presentation of the American flag from the American Legion Auxiliary, introduction of the library board members and guests, presentation of the keys to the library, cutting of the ribbon at the entrance, and benediction. Attorney Harold Eckroate, chairman of the library board, was master of ceremonies. He

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[43]"New Library Will Open in September," Barberton Herald (Ohio), [August 1957].

[44]"Barberton Library Opens With Gala Affair Nov. 2nd," Barberton Herald (Ohio), [October 1957].

[45]"New Library Will Open in September."

accepted the keys of the building from Roger Buzzard, and he in turn presented them to Miss Bliler. The program was followed by an open house to allow Barbertonians and others to tour the building.♣♣

After the new library opened, several articles in the Barberton Herald mentioned that the library had an increase in business. The Barberton Herald then listed the new books added to the collection.

The library continued to grow in circulation. February 13, 1960 broke all records for circulation and reference for Barberton Public Library. One thousand and twenty-six books were taken out that day. From the time the library moved into the new building, all services began a steady climb. Registered card holders went from 7,119 in 1950 to 13,481 at the end of 1959. Old records show that total across-desk circulation of books was 130,236. That total almost tripled in 1959. The count at the end of the year was 335,043. This does not include juvenile books circulated through the schools. In 1940, Mrs. Helen Bertsch, children's librarian, rang up a total in-school circulation of 54,220. In 1959 that circulation reached a count of 195,976. There were 923 reference questions answered in 1950. In 1959, 4,944 out of the ordinary questions were answered or information found.

♣♣"Barberton Public Library to be Dedicated Saturday," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 31 October 1957.

Clubs, schools, and individuals borrowed many films from the library. In order to provide patrons with a wide selection, the library belonged to three lending film circuits. In 1959 there were 1,043 films borrowed. That same year there were approximately 43,000 books available.[47]

Many school children used the Barberton Public Library. The demand for library services by public school students impelled Miss Bliler to write a pamphlet of suggestions to be used as a guideline by teachers in Barberton and Summit County on how to use the library and the limitations of the library.

Miss Bliler resigned as director of the library in July, 1966 to accept the same position at the Canal Fulton Public Library.[48] She left Barberton with a distinctive record of achievement.

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[47]"Barberton Library Breaks All Records in One Day," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 18 February 1960.

[48]Phillips.

Fig. 7. The Barberton Public Library.

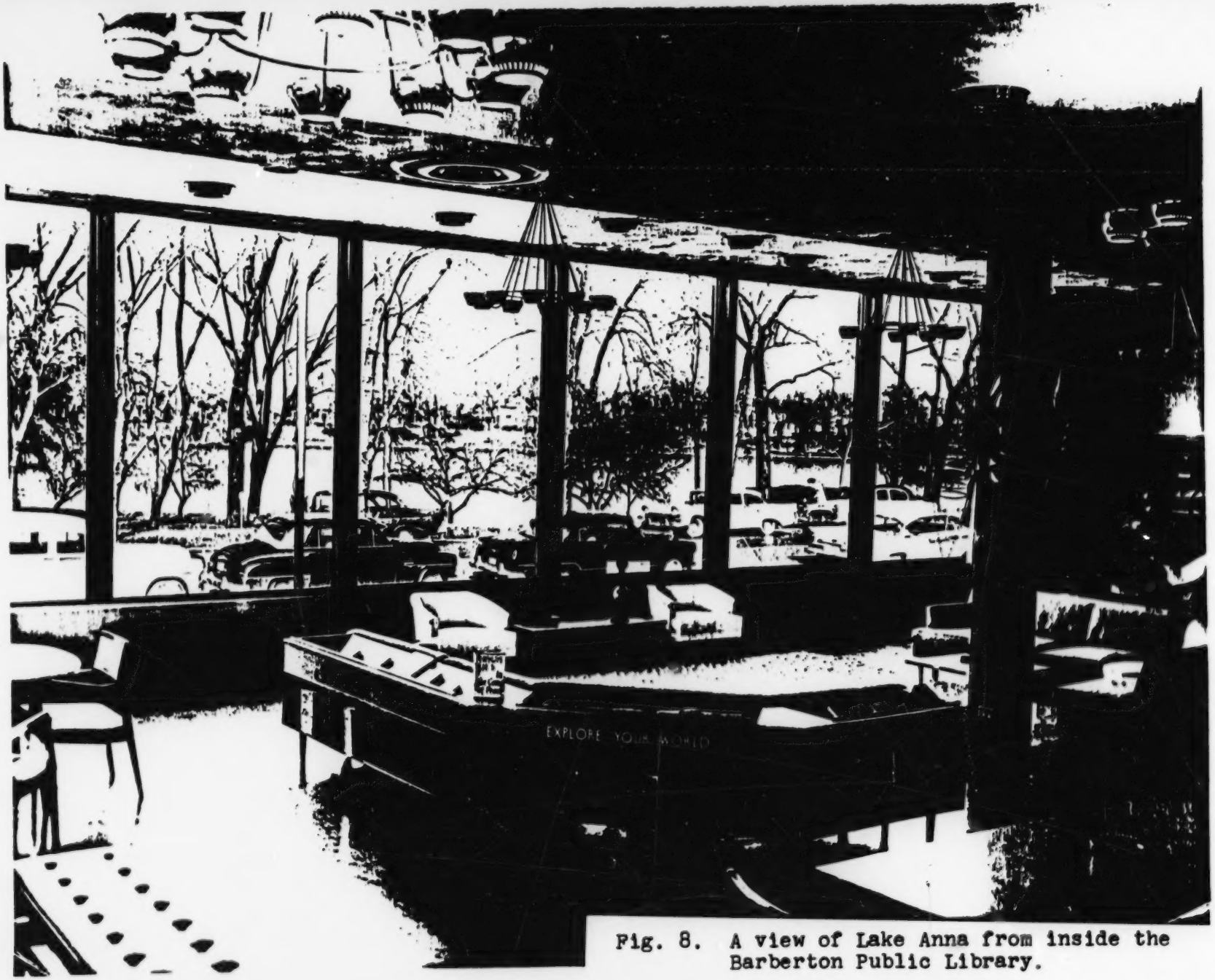

Fig. 8. A view of Lake Anna from inside the Barberton Public Library.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Fig. 9. A view inside the Barberton Public Library.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HELEN BERTSCH 1966-1976

Helen Bertsch succeeded Miss Bliler as director of the library. Mrs. Bertsch, a Barberton native and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Sisler, graduated from Barberton High School and earned a B.A. degree in teaching from the University of Akron. She taught four years at Highland Junior High School.[69]

Mrs. Bertsch's husband was killed in World War II. Shortly after her husband was killed, she was offered a job as children's librarian at Barberton Public Library. She served in this position for twenty years going from school to school, circulating books, giving lectures, and reading stories to children.

The library, under her leadership, continued to grow and expand. Total volumes of books housed in the library grew from 73,267 to 91,380. Circulation increased from 207,680 to 219,950. Registered borrowers were listed at 16,842. Also, the operating budget went from $128,211 to $203,249 in 1975.[70]

With Mrs. Bertsch's guidance, many new programs (that still continue today) were instituted. Children's services

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[69]Ron Speck, "Life's Pages Keep Turning," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 22 December 1976.

[70]Ibid.

included a pre-school story hour for three, four, and five year old children and their mothers. A summer reading club was started as well as a puppet club. There were cassettes for story telling, and many records, books and magazines were also available. Tours of the library were arranged and instructions were given on the use of the library. There was even counseling for scout merit badges.[71]

For senior citizens, film programs were presented at area senior citizen buildings on Monday evenings. In addition, books were loaned to the senior citizen buildings. If needed the library would provide delivery service for shut-ins. Any person living within the city limits, who could not come to the library to check out materials could have them brought to his or her home by members of the library staff. The new service was offered to invalids or elderly people. In addition to books on every subject, the library would bring magazines, pamphlets, films, videos, and records to those who used the home delivery service.[72]

For the film buff there were 8mm and 16mm films, film strips, 8mm and 16mm projectors, and a slide projector. All of these were available for loan. Many of the movies offered

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[71]"The Library has Many Services for Your Pleasure and Knowledge," Barberton Public Library (Ohio), [1972-73]. (pamphlet.)

[72]"Let Our Pages Do Your Walking," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 11 June 1970.

were comedies from the silent film era.[73]

For the business man, the library subscribed to several newspapers. They also carried Moodys' Services, Dun and Bradstreet Directories, Standard & Poor's New York Stock Exchange Reports and several other publications.

Monthly programs were planned. An example would be monthly talks on current books or Family Film Night at the library. There was a social room available for cultural and civic groups.[74]

For the convenience of everyone, a coin operated photocopier was put on the main floor. According to Mrs. Bertsch, this added service provided patrons with a fast and economical means of making duplicates of any important documents they might have. Also, copies could be made of reference materials from the library.[75] Telephone books from major cities throughout the United States were made available for patron use along with college catalogs from numerous universities.

Mrs. Bertsch was especially proud of the formation of the Friends of the Library Club in 1971. They were a group of people who were interested in helping to promote the library.

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[73]"The Library has Many Services for Your Pleasure and Knowledge."

[74]Ibid.

[75]"Barberton Library Now Has Copying Machine," Barberton Herald (Ohio), [1966-1972].

The Friends raised money and made purchases that could otherwise not be afforded. Mrs. Bertsch said that the group had accomplished a lot of good for the library.[76]

Mrs. Bertsch retired in December, 1976. She married Dr. Robert Mott on December 28, 1976. They moved to San Louis Obispo, between Los Angeles and San Francisco.[77]

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[76]Speck.

[77]Ibid.

BARBARA KIRBAWY 1976-
and the
RENOVATION AND REMODELING
of the
BARBERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Barbara Kirbawy succeeded Mrs. Bertsch as library director. Mrs. Kirbawy was a former library assistant director and head of reference. A native of New Jersey, she attended public schools in Wilbraham, Massachusetts and earned her B.A. degree in English from Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania. In 1968 Mrs. Kirbawy received her master's degree in Library Services from Rutgers University. She then worked fourteen months at the Scotch Plains Library in New Jersey before transferring to the Free Public Library of Woodbridge, New Jersey where she stayed for two and a half years. She moved to this area after she was married. Mrs. Kirbawy was originally hired as assistant librarian in Barberton in 1973.[78]

Barbara Kirbawy's tenure over the past fourteen years has been busy. One event of interest during the 1980's was a ban on smoking that became effective January 1, 1983. The Board of Trustees voted to ban all smoking in the library because of poor ventilation and air flow patterns in the

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[78]"New Library Director Calls Job 'Rewarding'," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 13 July 1977.

building. The library even held a Stop Smoking Clinic in the Ruth H. Spillette Social Room of the library in January of 1984.[79]

Also of significance was the conviction of an Akron man for three bomb threats to the library. Bradley Coalgrove of Akron was charged with telephone harassment, creating a false alarm and aggravated menacing. Coalgrove called the Barberton police three times saying that a bomb was planted in the library. The third time the police were able to trace the call.[80]

In all this time the library continued to grow in both volume and services. In November, 1977 the library contained over 99,000 volumes. This amount exceeded the originally intended capacity of 96,000.[81] By 1981, the library facilities were inadequate to properly house the varied materials and equipment available for patrons. Also, the library's steep front steps made it inaccessible to many of Barberton's residents. The Board of Trustees and staff members began to make plans to correct these problems.[82]

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[79]"Library Notes," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 24 January 1984.

[80]"Akron Man Convicted of Three Bomb Threats," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 6 September 1985.

[81]"'New' Library 20 Years Old," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 2 November 1977.

[82]"Proposed Rewrite of History Page for Annual Report."

Barberton Public Library had previously purchased the neighboring properties expressly for the purpose of future expansion. The corner property belonging to the Blazer family was acquired in 1971, and the Abernathy property was acquired in 1979. There was a fire in the Abernathy house on December 25, 1983. That house was razed for a temporary staff parking lot until construction began on the library addition.[83]

Barbara Kirbawy announced in January, 1984, that a 2.2 million dollar bond issue for the library would go on the May 8, primary ballot. The purpose of the bond issue was for enlarging, renovating, remodeling, improving, adding to, furnishing and equipping the existing Barberton Public Library and improving its site.[84]

Money from the bond issue could only be used for building and furnishing the library, not for salaries, utilities, books and other materials, or other operating costs. At that time, the operating costs were still funded by the county intangible taxes. In Governor Celeste's administration, the 1983 tax law repealed the intangible taxes at the end of 1985. Effective January 1, 1986, libraries and local government shared in the state income tax, receiving a set percentage based on the

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[83]"The Facts: Barberton Public Library Bond Issue," Barberton Public Library (Ohio), 26 January 1984. (photocopied page.)

[84]Jack Simonds, "Library to Seek Bond to Expand Facilities," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 24 January 1984.

prior year's income. There had never been a Barberton Library bond issue. The voters had not been asked for funds to construct the original building, which had opened in 1957.[83] Figure 10 is a chart that explained the cost of the bond issue to the average homeowner.

The goals set by the library for the renovation of the library were:

1. Easier access to the building and its services through ground level entrance, elevator, wider aisles, and more logical arrangement of the collections.

2. With the added space, improved and added services such as AV materials.
Automated circulation for greater efficiency and accuracy.
Possibly computers for the public to increase awareness of possible uses by adults and children.
Quiet study areas.
Separate children's story and craft room.
Relieve overcrowded shelves.

3. Improved efficiency in use of staff due to separation of tasks and removal of physical barriers.

4. Greatly expanded space for exhibits of Barberton history materials, including Sports Hall of Fame materials, O.C. Barber windows, donations of pictures, scrapbooks, city directories, etc.

5. Wider variety of programs for all ages and interests.[84]

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[83]"The Facts: Barberton Public Library Bond Issue."

[84]Ibid.

BARBERTON - LIBRARY

Barberton Pub Lib

2-6-84

47

BARBERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Proposed Budget $ 2,200,000.00

Total Tax Assessed Property Valuation (City of Barberton) $ 199,628,920.00

Population: City of Barberton (1980) 29,751

probable

Interest	8%	9%	10%	12%	13%	Years to Pay Back
Millage Cost/person/yr	2.733 $18.34	2.800 $18.78	2.865 $19.23	2.998 $20.11	3.064 $20.56	5
Millage Cost/person/yr	1.587 $10.65	1.648 $11.06	1.708 $11.46	1.829 $12.28	1.890 $12.68	10
Millage Cost/person/yr	1.205 $8.08	1.264 $8.48	1.322 $8.87	1.440 $9.66	1.499 $10.06	15
Millage Cost/person/yr	1.014 $6.80	1.072 $7.19	1.130 $7.58	1.245 $8.36	1.303 $8.74	20

definite

Cost Per Year to Average Homeowner at 10% for 20 years

Market Value	Assessed Value for Taxation	Cost/Year
$ 20,000.00	$ 7,000.00	$ 7.91
$ 30,000.00	$10,500.00	$11.86
$ 40,000.00	$14,000.00	$15.81
$ 50,000.00	$17,500.00	$19.77
$ 60,000.00	$21,000.00	$23.72
$ 80,000.00	$28,000.00	$31.63
$100,000.00	$35,000.00	$39.54

Fig. 10. Chart explaining what the cost of the library bond issue would be to the average homeowner.

The voters approved the twenty year 2.2 million dollar bond issue on May 9, 1984.[87] Koster and Holzheimer, an architect firm from Cleveland, was hired to design the desired improvements on the library.[88] The ground-breaking ceremony was held for the renovation December 3, 1984, but actual construction did not begin until the following spring in May, 1985.[89] Among the speakers at the ground-breaking ceremony were Barbara Kirbawy, state librarian Richard M. Cheski, and Barberton mayor William Judge. An honored guest was former library director, Elisabeth Bliler.[90] Figure 11 shows a flier that announced the ground-breaking ceremony.

Construction was delayed by architect William Koster because of a revision in the amount of steel to be used as well as for building changes. Less steel was needed than originally estimated, because of the soil structure surrounding the area.[91]

The elevator shaft was completed and excavation was

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[87]Frances B. Murphey, "Summit, Barberton Libraries Win Funding," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 9 May 1984.

[88]"Editorials: Like a Best-Seller," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 28 February 1984.

[89]Frances B. Murphey, "A Quiet Library? Not in Barberton," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 22 July 1985.

[90]Frances B. Murphey, "Barberton Library to Get a New Look," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 10 December 1984.

[91]Susan Bowers, "Library Addition Building is Now Finally Underway," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 28 May 1985.

BARBERTON - BARBERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

BARBERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
602 West Park Avenue, Barberton, Ohio 44203
216-745-1194

GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES
Barberton Public Library
Addition and Remodeling

December 3, 1984
10:00 A.M.

Introductions
Mrs. Barbara Kirbawy
Library Director

Remarks
Dr. Robert C. Carson
President, Barberton Library Board of Trustees

Rev. Ralph Young
President, Barberton Board of Education

Mr. Richard M. Cheski
State Librarian

The Honorable William Judge
Mayor of Barberton

Mr. William D. Koster
Architect, Koster and Associates, Architects, Inc.

Ground-breaking
Speakers will help to remove the first shovelful of dirt for the project

Refreshments
Coffee, tea, and pastries will be provided in the main floor lounge, courtesy of the Friends of the Library

Fig. 11. Ground-breaking Ceremony.

started for the ground floor in May, 1985. An outer shell was built, starting on the north side. The new addition was put in there, including a new solarium. The library hours were shortened, but the library remained open during the renovation.[72]

It was one year later on April 30, 1986, that the library's new glassed-in entrance, a street level door facing Lake Anna, was opened for public use. The patrons had been using an entrance from an alley during part of the construction.[73]

One of the most treasured exhibits in the library are the original windows from the O.C. Barber mansion. The library had wanted to display the windows years earlier but was unable to do so. The new addition features the stained glass windows that Barberton's founder, O.C. Barber, put in his mansion at the Anna Dean Farm in 1910. Two of the windows portray Hippomenes and Atalanta who raced in Greek Mythology. These windows were donated to the library by Margaret Silliman in memory of her brother, James Cormany. He had acquired them before the Barber house was razed in 1965.[74]

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[72]Ibid.

[73]Frances B. Murphey, "Barberton Library Work Almost Done," Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 1 May 1986.

[74]Murphey, "Barberton Library to Get a New Look."

Barberton City Council leased five more of the windows to the library for twenty-five years at a dollar per year. These windows also depict scenes from Greek mythology. Since the demolition of the mansion, the city purchased and stored them inside the water plant on Summit Road in Copley. The windows were built into the west side of the addition where the main entrance is located. The city had acquired the windows when Co-Op Enterprises went bankrupt in 1976. The windows are one of the most enchanting features of the renovation.[75] [76]

The renovation was completed in the summer and the library was rededicated on Sunday, September 7th, 1986. An Open House was held so that Barbertonians could view the newly remodeled building. Speakers for the occasion were the mayor of Barberton, William Judge, and a state senator, Robert Nettle.[77]

By 1989 Barberton Public Library had almost 110,000 volumes. Similar to most public libraries, their nonprint materials include microfiche, microfilm, records, audiotapes, videotapes, films, slides, maps, charts, and art reproductions. Currently working in the library are six

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[75]Ibid.

[76]Jack Simonds, "Library Awaits City's Gift of Barber Windows," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 30 October 1984.

[77]"Barberton Library Rededication Set For Sept. 7," Barberton Herald (Ohio), 9 September 1986.

professional librarians, sixteen paraprofessionals, and a number of dedicated volunteers. The library is open on the average of sixty-seven hours per week. Also, the library publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, Keylines, for people interested in the library's activities."[88] [89]

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[88]American Library Directory 1989-90, (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1989), 1377-1378.

[89]State Library of Ohio, Statistics of Ohio Libraries 1989, (Columbus: State Library of Ohio, 1989), 26.

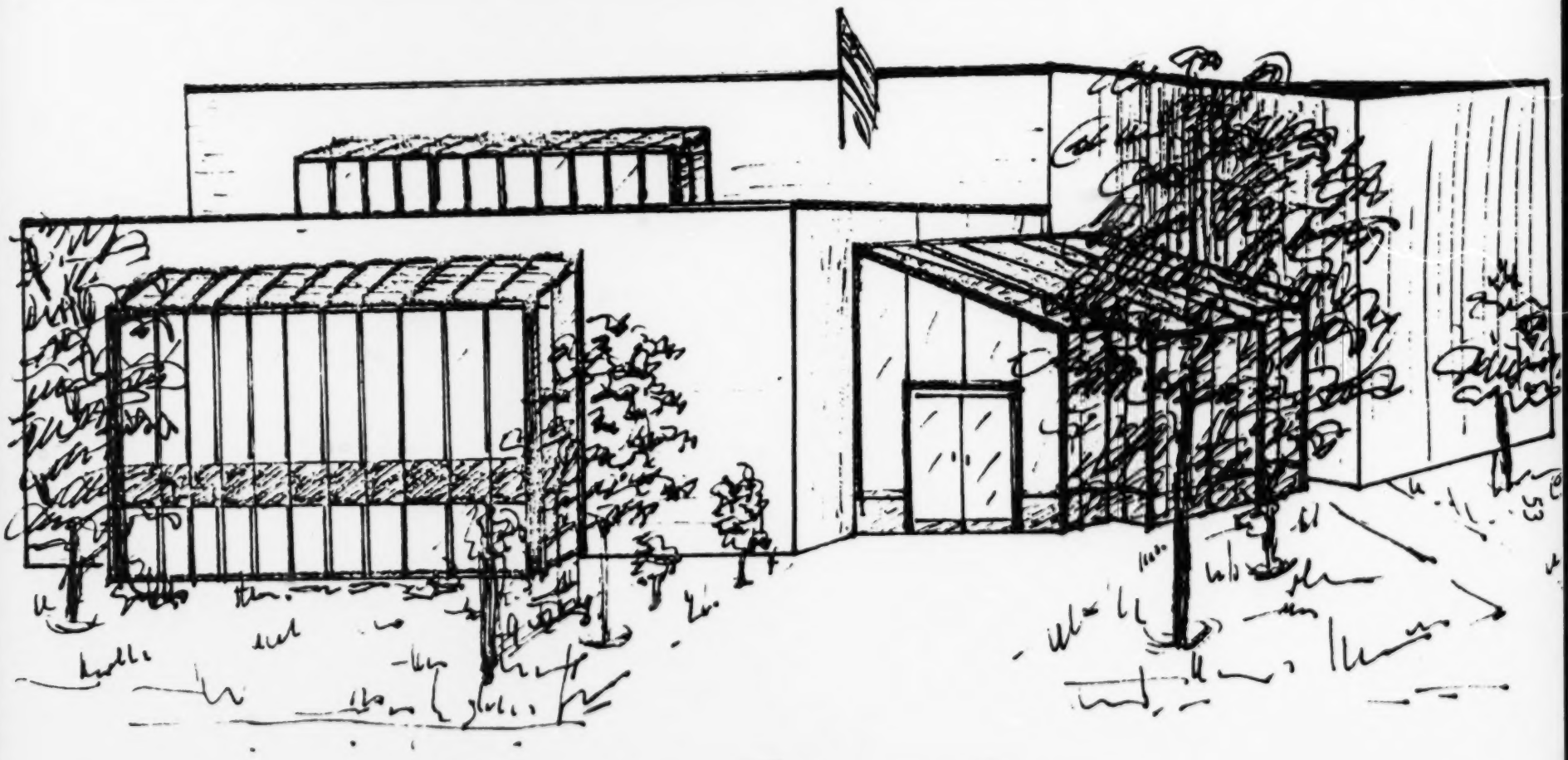

Fig. 12. A drawing of the renovated Barberton Public Library.

CONCLUSION

The following is a copy of a statement by the Barberton Public Library as to what it considers its role in the community to be.

> The library is an information center. It seeks to assemble a collection of books, magazines, pamphlets and similar materials which are responsive to community needs.
>
> It seeks to locate information stored in other libraries and similar data sources and to arrange for the acquisition of such material, when needed, through inter-library loans and/or purchase of photo copies. It has a number of librarians trained to provide reference services, either in person or over the phone. It provides programs on subjects of interest and/or concern to the community. It seeks to publicize its various services through stories provided to the newspapers, through fliers, and through a newsletter put out with the assistance of the Friends of the Barberton Public Library.
>
> The library is a cultural center. Through its history collection it provides access to material on the community and its heritage. it provides programming that emphasizes various aspects of that heritage. It works with various local groups to enhance the cultural opportunities in the community. It provides a public bulletin board to announce and promote these various cultural events.
>
> The library is a part of the educational system. It provides programs introducing the library, its resources and their use to classes from local schools and other groups. It provides study areas and appropriate facilities such as typewriters, a copy machine and computers. It provides reference service for various class projects. It is open at times that are convenient for students. It sponsors programs of an educational nature.
>
> The library is a research center. It has an extensive collection on local history, and it has been aggressively seeking to add to that collection. It has a considerable amount of genealogical material. It has staff members who can assist in the use of these materials. It can also provide information on specialized subjects to requestors from outside the community.
>
> The library is a community center. It provides

space for community groups to meet. It, together with other groups and agencies, sponsors various cultural events. It provides display space for groups and/or individuals and serves as a community bulletin board.

The library is a recreational center. Its collection provides a mix of best-sellers, romance, mysteries, science-fiction and the like, popular magazines and newspapers. It sponsors recreational programs such as a summer reading club, story hours, craft classes, movies. It has a collection of recordings of various types of music, films, film strips, video cassettes. The library is open on evenings and on Saturdays to provide opportunities for all to use its facilities. It provides information about other recreational activities that are available.

The library is a community service agency. It seeks to provide library services to those who are home-bound and cannot come to the library. It provides specialized aids, such as large print books, for those who cannot use the usual materials. It serves as a reference source to the various community agencies and the services that they provide.[100]

The Barberton Public Library is constantly changing and growing for everyone's benefit and to the best of the ability of all staff members. The library constantly strives to provide needed services to enhance the lives of the general public. The Barberton Public Library has succeeded in being a vital and essential force in the community.

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[100]"The Role of the Barberton Public Library," Barberton Public Library (Ohio), n.d. (photocopied pages.)

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